

**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF AGE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON EFFECTIVE
USE OF MODERN CONTRACEPTIVES AMONG YOUNG MOTHERS IN NNAMDI
AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY**

Alozie, Chioma Precious

Cp.alozie@unizik.edu.ng;

Faculty of Education

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

S. N. Igweilo (Ph.D);

Faculty of Education

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Jane Obele

janeoble16@yahoo.com

Faculty of Education

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

This research study aimed to explore the impact of age and level of education on the effective use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra state. The utilization of modern contraceptives has been proven to be essential to reducing maternal and child mortality rates, as well as promoting healthy child spacing and family planning. However, younger mothers often face several challenges when it comes to the effective use of modern contraceptives. Factors such as age and level of education have been found to significantly impact the use of contraceptives among young mothers, hence, the need for this research study.

The research method adopted was a descriptive research design, and data was collected using a questionnaire. The target population for this study was young mothers between the ages 18-36 years attending Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The sample size was obtained using simple random sampling technique. The instrument was an adopted, the instrument was validated by three experts, one from the department of Health promotion and Public Health Education and two from measurement and Evaluation department all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Kuder Richardson 20 (K-R 20) the co-efficient yielded was 0.89. Chi-square was used for hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings from this study would contribute to the existing knowledge on the impact of age and level of education on the effective use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The study ultimately seeks to promote healthy family planning and contribute

to reducing unplanned pregnancy, abortion, maternal and child mortality rates among young mothers who are students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

Keywords: age, level of education, young mothers

Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of age and level of education with the effective use of modern contraceptives among young mothers has become a critical area of study in public health and social sciences. According to Oxford dictionary “Explore means to examine completely or carefully in order to find out more about something” Understanding these dynamics is crucial for informing policies and interventions aimed at improving reproductive health outcomes among this demographic.

The transition to motherhood during adolescence or early adulthood is a pivotal life event that poses unique challenges and opportunities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 16 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years and 1 million girls under the age of 15 give birth each year globally (WHO, 2020). In Nigeria, a significant proportion of births occur among adolescents and young adults, highlighting the urgency of addressing reproductive health needs among this group using contraceptives

The World Health Organization (2015) identified contraceptives as one of the six fundamental health interventions that needed to achieve safe motherhood. The World Health Organization observed that supporting in better contraceptives not only improves a mother’s health and that of her family, but also increases the number of women in the workforce and promotes the economic well-being of communities and countries.

Besides, Ofonime (2017) defined ccontraceptive as a conscious effort by a couple to limit or space the number of children they have through the use of family planning methods. The effective use of modern contraceptives plays a crucial role in promoting maternal and child health, reducing unintended pregnancies, and empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives. Modern contraceptive methods encompass a range of options such as oral contraceptives, intrauterine devices (IUDs), implants, and condoms, among others. *These methods are more reliable and safer than traditional method* examples of traditional methods are rhythm method, withdrawal methods, cervical mucus, abstinence, lactation amenorrhea etc and contribute significantly to the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity when used correctly and consistently (UNFPA, 2021).

Despite the potential benefits of modern contraceptives, their uptake and utilization among young mothers in Nigeria remain suboptimal. Factors such as cultural norms, religious beliefs, lack of access to information and services, and socioeconomic disparities contribute to the low prevalence of contraceptive use among adolescents and young adults (NPC & ICF, 2019). Additionally, age and level of education have been identified as critical determinants influencing contraceptive decision-making and utilization patterns among young mothers. *Casterline, (2017) maintains that the fertility transition occurred in Europe in the nineteenth century when there was a decline in fertility rates. He suggests that this transition occurred due to social and economic changes that led to the adoption of new reproductive behaviors. The new behaviors were initially adopted by a few individuals and eventually spread to the larger population through social contacts, education, and institutional change.*

Casterline(2017) also highlights the importance of understanding the underlying social, economic, and cultural factors that influence fertility behavior. He suggests that these factors can either facilitate or hinder the diffusion of new reproductive behaviors. For instance, the spread of family planning methods was facilitated by the expansion of education and healthcare services.

Age is defined as a just number, a human has lived on the earth. Wicklund & Kowalczyk, 2023). As older women of childbearing age are thinking of training their children and younger women are yearning to have their children could affect their usage of modern contraceptives. In Nigeria, it is a common phenomenon for younger women of childbearing age, who are not yet married and may want to get pregnant at all costs to hook a man of their liking or they may think it is important to prove their fertility to get a husband. A typical African mentality emphasizes that immediately after a young girl gets married, she assumes the responsibility of reproduction. Besides the age of young mothers, the level of education of young mothers can also contribute immensely in the use of modern contraceptives.

Level of education refers to how well individuals are well educated or not. In this study, the level of education relates to the categories of basic education, senior secondary and tertiary education, and young mothers belongs to. The importance of education on the modern use of contraceptives cannot be over-emphasized because, to a large extent, education empowers young mothers to partake in major family decisions, including the use of contraceptives. The educational attainment of a woman not only determines her level of income and type of earnings but also gives access and exposure in connection with modern contraceptives (Eliason et al. 2014). From a personal perspective, the quest of a woman to increase her education increases her tendency to adopt modern contraceptives.

Alternatively use is refer to as employing things in some ways, as a more formal equivalent of ‘utilization’. Utilization on the other hand is an act of using (Godwin-Maduiké, 2015). In the context of this study, use refers to the carrying out of family planning programmes by young mothers to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health.

Statement of the Problem

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, serves as an ideal setting for investigating the impact of age and educational level on the effective use of modern contraceptives among young mothers. As one of the leading institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, the university attracts a diverse student population from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

Moreover, understanding the factors that influence contraceptive use among young mothers enrolled at Nnamdi Azikiwe University can inform the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting reproductive health and rights on campus and beyond. By identifying barriers and facilitators to contraceptive uptake, policymakers and healthcare providers can design evidence-based strategies to improve access to information, services, and support systems for young mothers.

This study is significant for several reasons. By focusing on age and educational factors, the study addresses critical gaps in understanding the nuanced dynamics that shape contraceptive behaviors among young mothers. Second, the findings will inform policymakers, healthcare providers, and health educators about the specific needs and preferences of young mothers regarding contraceptive services and support. Finally, the study underscores the importance of

tailored interventions and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting reproductive rights and health equity among vulnerable populations.

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore the relationship between age, level of education, and the effective use of modern contraceptives among young mothers attending Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to determine:

1. The impact of age on the use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka
2. The impact of Level of education on the use of modern contraceptives among mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of age on the use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?
2. What is the impact of level of education on the use modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the impact of age on the use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.
2. There is no significant difference in the impact of level of education on the use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka .

Methods

The research design adopted was survey research design. A survey research is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analysing data from a few sample or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The population of the study comprised of 13,346 young mothers that are students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

The study was conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State

The sample was 750 Of young mothers from six faculties in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, the sample were drawn using random sampling techniques and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire, the instrument was an adopted instrument, Face and content validation was done by three experts, *Chi square* statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. kuder- Richardson 20 was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The data were arranged by the researcher and the responses were tailed and presented on frequency distribution percentage table.

The study is conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, fondly called Unizik, is a federal university in Anamabra state, Nigeria. It consists of two campuses in Anambra State. The campus is located in 2.5 kilometres from the Awka city centre. The faculties domiciled at the Awka campus are Arts, Bioscience, Education, Engineering, Environmental sciences, Law. Management sciences, Physical sciences, Agriculture and Social sciences.

The choice of Unizik as the area of study by the fact that there appear to be no research has been done in Unizik, on Exploring the impact of age and level of Education among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1

What is the impact of age on the use of modern contraceptive use among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University based on their ages?

Table 1.

Percentage of Modern Contraceptive Use by Age of Young Mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Use of Modern Contraceptives	16-20yrs Freq. (%)	21-25yrs Freq.(%)	26-30yrs Freq.(%)	36 & Above Freq. (%)	Total Freq. (%)
Use	84(61.8)	176(68.8)	156(72.2)	100(78.1)	516(70.1)
Do not use	52(38.2)	80(31.2)	60(27.8)	28(21.9)	220(29.9)
Total	136(100)	256(100)	216(100)	128(100)	736(100)

Table 1 shows the percentage of modern contraceptive use by age of young mothers. Similarly, 10.4% more of those aged between 26-30 years of age use modern contraceptives than those between 16-20 years of age. This suggests that a greater percentage of older mothers tend to use modern contraceptives when compared to the younger ones.

Research Question 1

What difference exists in modern contraceptive use among young mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka in Nnamdi Azikiwe University based on their age ?

Research Question 2

What is the percentage difference in modern contraceptive use among young mothers based on their educational levels?

Table 2: Percentage of Modern Contraceptive Use by Educational Levels of Young Mothers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Use of Modern Contraceptives	Primary Freq. (%)	Secondary Freq.(%)	Tertiary Freq.(%)	Total Freq. (%)
Use	12(50)	184(61.3)	320(77.7)	516(70.1)
Do not use	12(50)	116(38.7)	92(22.3)	220(29.9)
Total	24(100)	300(100)	412(100)	736(100)

When compared with those secondary, 16.4% more of those use modern contraceptives. These percentage differences suggest that the higher the level of education of young mothers, the more they tend to use modern contraceptives.

Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant difference in the use of modern contraceptives among young mothers in Unizik based on their ages.

Table 1: Chi-square Test of difference in the Use of Modern Contraceptives Based on the Ages of young mothers In Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Use of Modern Contraceptives	16-20yrs Freq. (%)	21-25yrs Freq. (%)	26-30yrs Freq. (%)	36 & Above Freq. (%)	df	X ²	p-value	Decision
Use	84(61.8)	176(68.8)	156(72.2)	100(78.1)				
Do not use	52(38.2)	80(31.2)	60(27.8)	28(21.9)	3	9.13	.028	S*
Total	136(100)	256(100)	216(100)	128(100)				

*Significant

Chi-square test results in Table 6 shows that there is a significant difference in the use of modern contraceptives based on the ages of married women of childbearing age, $X^2 (df,3) = 9.13$, p -value = .028. Since the p -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 2 Chi-square Test of difference in the Use of Modern Contraceptives Based on Levels of Education Young Mothers In Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Use of Modern Contraceptives	Primary Freq. (%)	Secondary Freq.(%)	Tertiary Freq.(%)	df	X ²	p-value	Decision
Use	12(50)	184(61.3)	320(77.7)				
Do not use	12(50)	116(38.7)	92(22.3)	2	26.90	.000	S
Total	24(100)	300(100)	412(100)				

Chi-square test results in Table 9 show that there is a significant difference in the use of modern contraceptives based on the educational levels of married women of childbearing age, $X^2 (df,2) = 26.90$, p -value = .000. Since the p -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected

In conclusion, the impact of age and educational level on the effective use of modern contraceptives among young mothers at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, represents a significant area of inquiry with implications for policy, practice, and future research. By addressing these issues, this study aims to contribute to the advancement of reproductive health and rights for young mothers in Nigeria and beyond. *The study ultimately seeks to promote healthy family planning and contribute to reducing unplanned pregnancy, abortion, maternal and child mortality rates among young mothers who are students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University.*

Recommendation

There is need to involve influencers and role models to promote contraceptive use and share their experiences. Ensure that contraceptives are readily available at the university health center or nearby facility. The university should create a mobile health services to reach students and make it accessible for them..

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